

February 11, 1974

PRESIDENT: Senator Whitney and then Chambers and then Nore.

SENATOR WHITNEY: Now Mr. President, I would like to ask Senator Carpenter a question please.

PRESIDENT: Senator Carpenter yield.

SENATOR WHITNEY: I am inclined to go along with you on this bill if it is self supporting with an increase in the tax on alcohol do this. Now are you in favor, it has got a four million dollar tag on it, are you in favor of increasing alcohol tax in order to make this program self supporting?

SENATOR CARPENTER: Senator Whitney, I made the statement a while ago and it still stands. Four million, you can put any tag you want onto it. The program in a sense will have to be limited to the amount of money available. Now I made a, I don't want to have this body on this bill appropriate 5¢ from any tax funds. And that I give you my word. If we do not and are not willing to tax the industry which eventually is paid by the people that cause the problem, I am not in favor of the bill. Now if you put a 2¢ a gallon tax on beer, which I am in favor of, you raise about two million dollars. There are an amount of federal funds which I do not know the exact amount and I don't think that anybody can tell but probably another half of a million dollars. We could start somewhere with 2 and 2½ million dollars with the program. We use the money to the extent that the money would furnish the end result, and I promise you my friend that if the Legislature is not willing to tax the industry, I am not in favor of the bill.

SENATOR WHITNEY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Next to speak is Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President and members of the Legislature. As a member of the committee that voted to kill the bill, I just want to add a bit as to what has been said by Senator Luedtke and DeCamp. The concept of the principals behind the bill were never at issue, they were never debated when the vote was taken to kill the bill. There had been so much confusion, so much hostility, so much contradiction on the part of those who claim to be for this bill, the experts and the authorities that it was felt that some additional study might be necessary so that the Legislature itself could take full responsibilities for bringing in a bill which we would stand behind. If the body is going to do it at this time, I think that is fine, but I think that a method of funding it such as that suggested by Senator Carpenter ought to be seriously considered, and what we have to do is listen and take heed to what Senator DeCamp said. There is one number on the bill LB127, but there are several versions. So I think that the members should be completely clear on what will finally be voted on if the bill makes it to final reading. I think that a distinction ought to be drawn somewhere Senator Moylan between a drunk and an alcoholic. And alcoholism based upon what I have come to understand is a physical dependency and not totally psychological. It is not totally a mental problem. I don't drink but perhaps my body chemistry is such that if I took a drink that I would be stuck on it, I would have to have it, I would be an alcoholic. There are other people who are not alcoholics, they can take it or leave it, but they do develop a psychological dependency and they choose to hide behind alcohol. So there are fine distinctions that I think are going to have to be made so that the bill can be tailored to deal with problems effectively that can be dealt with effectively by legislation.